COCHIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS.

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

BUDGET SESSION OF 1101.

Saturday, the 16th of Karkadagam 1101.
31st of July 1926.

The Council assembled under the presidency of the Diwan for the sixth meeting of the budget session, in the Town Hall, Ernakulam, at 11-30. a. m. on Saturday, the 16th of Karkadagam 1101, corresponding to the 31st of July 1926. Messrs. S. S, Koder, Lonappan Chakkola, P. Munda Vaidyan, Poulo Mampilli, T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar, A. Sankara Puduval, A. B. Salem and H. J. Walmesly were absent.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

An Excise Licensing Board.

109. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will the Hon'ble Member for Excise be pleased to state whether there is any Excise Licensing Board in our State as in the Madras Presidency?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—No.

The Excise policy of the Darbar.

110. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—In view of the statement made by the Superintendent of Excise in the Legislative Council and by the Government in the Proceedings of the Diwan appointing an Excise Committee that the Excise policy of the Darbar is similar to the policy pursued in the Madras Presidency and Travancore, will the Government be pleased to state whether the Government is aware that the Hon ble Member in charge of the Excise Department in the Madras Presidency has more than once mentioned in the Madras Legislative Council that the goal of the Excise policy in the Madras Presidency is the attainment of Prohibition, and if so, whether the present Excise policy of our Government also is the same?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—So far as is known, the latest policy of the Government of Madras is to work up to Prohibition. The Darbar's policy is also the same.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—May I know whether the Hon'ble fa[illegible]mber for Excise has begun to work up to this policy of large [illegible]pition, and, if so, when?

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Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—The policy of the Madras Government is to work up to Prohibition. The Darbar's policy also is the same. This policy was begun in the State after the introduction of the independent shop system throughout the State, that is, from 1092.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Our policy was defined to be one of maximum revenue and minimum consumption, and the Madras Government is favouring the policy of working up to Prohibition. It is stated that it is the same as ours or rather we have adopted that policy. I want to know from which date we began to follow that policy.

President.—The Madras Government's policy is also maximum revenue and minimum consumption.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—It is all the same. Our policy, like the Madras policy, is also centred in the contract distillery and tree-tax systems.

President.—What is the difference between our policy and the Madras Government's policy?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—There is absolutely no difference. The object is to work up to Prohibition.

President.—If we follow this principle of maximum revenue and minimum consumption, we will ultimately reach the goal of Prohibition. "Maximum revenue and minimum consumption" is a well-known maxim in the mouths of all persons who are attached to the anti-drink campaign.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Then there cannot be an increase in consumption. But in the figures supplied to us there is an increase in consumption.

President.—Looking at the figures, will you be in a position to find out that, instead of a reduction in consumption, we find an increase or at any rate the same rate of consumption is kept up?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—I shall go further. Taking the figures for a few successive years as a whole, the tendency is for a decrease and not for an increase.

President.—The figures will justify your statement?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—Yes, Sir. There is gradual decrease, on the whole.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Figures show that there is an increase. In 1090 the arrack consumption is 31,083 proof gallons. It has increased to 40,493 in 1099. So there is an increase. The same is the case of toddy. The number of trees tapped in 1090 is 19,637. It has increased to 75,196 in 1100, an abnormal increase.

President.—You must at the same time take no the increase in population.

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Mr. K. T. Mathew.—The increase in population is very small.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—Even if there is an increase in the number of trees tapped, the increase in population is larger. It was in 1092 that we introduced the independent shop system for toddy in the Southern Taluks. The number of trees tapped in 1092 was 56,105; in 1093, 61,068—an increase; in 1094, 57,653—decrease; in 1095, 64,349—increase; in 1096, 66,546—also increase; in 1097, 64,367—decrease; in 1098, 60,879—decrease—and in 1099, 58,395—further decrease. With regard to 1100, no doubt the figures as they stand will show the number of trees tapped to be 75,196. But this cannot be taken as a sure criterion. For in the Southern Taluks the marking was done yearly till 1100, and from that year it began to be half-yearly. This will explain for the apparent increase in that year. It is not a real one.

President.—You say that trees are marked in both the half-years. Suppose we divide it into halves, what will be the number?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—The number should not be divided into one half, because marking in the Northern Taluks was half-yearly, and it was yearly only in the Southern Taluks. So we will have to divide the number of trees tapped in the Southern Taluks only into two, and add to it the number tapped in the Northern Taluks.

President.—Can we draw any inference from the figures given there?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—From 1097 onwards we find a steady decrease so far as toddy is concerned. So far as the consumption of arrack is concerned, in 1092 the quantity was 37,237 proof gallons; in 1093, 33,882 and odd proof gallons—decrease; in 1094, 40,128 proof gallons—increase; in 1095, 65,519 proof gallons—increase; 1096, 39,554 proof gallons—decrease; in 1097, 38,454 proof gallons—decrease; in 1098, 41,108 proof in gallons—increase; 1099, 40,493 proof gallons—decrease; and in 1100, 33,274 proof gallons—a large fall.

President.—Can we say that year after year there is a steady decrease or in some years there will be an increase and in some years there will be a decrease?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—So far as the Northern Taluks are concerned, we have not got so much floating population as in the Southern Taluks. So, if we take separately for the Northern Taluks, we will see that it was a case of gradual fall. But in the Southern Taluks the increase is due to the large influx of floating population, because Mattancheri is a big

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commercial town, and if the seasons are favourable, many people come there, and they patronize our shops. It is due to this fact that we find a fluctuating increase in the figures.

President.—At any rate, this policy should be kept in view.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—In 1100, 62,000 and odd cocoanut trees were tapped. In 1101, 61,880 cocoanut trees were tapped till the end of Medam.

President.—You are reading from to-day's answer. When are these licenses given? I think it is early in the half-year. Mr. Mathew draws our attention to the figures for the two years 1100 and 1101. So far as 1101 is concerned, figures have been supplied only till the end of Medam, and with reference to these two years we find an increase in 1101.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—With regard to a certain class of trees, namely, cocoanut trees; but there will be a fall with regard to other trees.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—No, Sir. There is an increase in the palmyra also.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—For the year 1100, it was 8,117, and for 1101, 8,130 till the end of Medam. There is a considerable fall in the number of sago palms. We must take into consideration the total number of trees and not some classes of trees alone.

President.—Since we have come only up to Medam, and we have not come to the end of the year, the question is, whether you are going to have more trees tapped after Medam, and therefore, whether the number would increase.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—By the end of Medam the whole licensing will be practically over.

President.—So no fresh licenses will be issued after Medam, I suppose?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—No, except in very few cases.

President.—Even supposing there may be 100 or 200, the total will not be more than that of 1100?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—No.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—In palmyras the number of trees licensed up till Medam is 8,130. There are so many months to pass.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—In sago there is a decrease of more than 300 trees.

President.—Suppose we want a reduction in the number of trees tapped; then we will have to resort to a policy of not giving licenses.

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Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—We cannot do that. The shop-keeper must have sufficient supply. He has to pay rent to the Government.

President.—Suppose he increases the value of the article?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—Then nobody would go to him. For example, in a place there may be half a dozen shops. If one man raises the price of the article, he will not get customers.

Mr. M. K. Raman.—Cannot the Government fix a rate for all places, and issue an order that arrack should be sold at such and such a rate in such and such places and not above or below it.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—Our policy is based on the Madras policy. It is not done there.

President.—There is also this thing to be taken into account. We cannot chalk out a policy of our own. We have always to see how the system is working in the neighbouring countries.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—We are not following either the Madras policy or the Travancore policy. But it is only a camouflage to say that we are following the policy of Madras and Travancore. As a matter of fact, we are not following that policy. I wish to point out an instance. When we compare th consumption in the two States, Cochin consumes more, and the consumption of toddy is three times more than what it is in Travancore.

President.—We have not compared the figures.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—So we have not been following the policy of Prohibition. There should have been a decrease in the number of trees tapped; and the consumption of arrack, we do not find, has in any way decreased.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—There is decrease in the quantity of arrack consumed.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—What is the meaning of saying that there is decrease?

The Excise Advisory Committee.

111. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will the Government be pleased to inform whether one of the objects with which the Excise Advisory Committee has been appointed is to suggest ways and means for controlling liquor traffic and to bring about Prohibition within a practically small time in the State?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—The object with which the Excise Committee has been appointed is given in the Diwan's

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